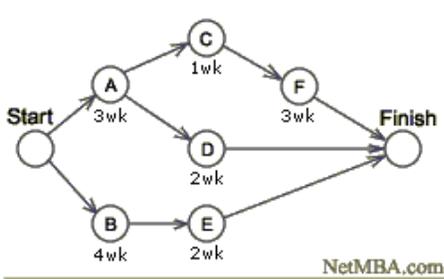


Nirvana Project Management

by Art Ticknor

The path to *nirvana* is a seemingly complex undertaking. So the question may come up about whether we can apply modern project management techniques such as Critical Path Analysis (CPA) to expedite our success.



CPA was developed in the 1950s to control large defense projects, and it has been widely used since then to plan a project's tasks, relate their interdependencies, and monitor their scheduled completion. With the project to find or recognize what we are at our core, however, we don't know what it will take to accomplish it. In fact, the goal itself isn't known. The best we can do is to get an idea of what it's not. And, in fact, the entire process

is not one of construction but of deconstruction. We find or become the truth by retreating from illusion and delusion.

There is a path, but we will not know whether we're truly on it or off on meandering byways. Richard Rose described this path as a ladder, the next rung of which wouldn't be known until we are standing on it. He laid out an approach for climbing this "Jacob's Ladder" in an inspired small book titled *The Psychology of the Observer*. In the story of Exodus, Jacob dreamed one night of a ladder set upon the earth, reaching to heaven, with angels ascending and descending it. Our climb up the ladder of self-definition is one of retreating from untruth about the self, using the mind to understand the mind and, if successful, to go beyond it. The reason this retreat is possible is that messages from the core of our being are coming down the ladder into the conscious mind. If the core of our being is referred to as Light, the messengers coming from the center to the periphery, where we're currently caught in a hypnotic trance, are like photons -- not fully subject to the restrictions of space-time relativity.

The modification to Critical Path methodology that we need to make in order to apply it to our quest for self-definition -- for realizing what we truly are, and the unimaginable Full Satisfaction that results -- is to focus on the *critical*. We will need to monitor what we're doing, and whether we're living our life in a way that's aimed at understanding that life, with ongoing *careful evaluation*. There will be *crucial, decisive* forks in the road where choices will either hasten or retard our progress. The more we clarify our values and convictions, the more we'll be capable of sustaining a *nuclear chain-reaction* when something bigger than our individuality -- Francis Thompson called it "The Hound of Heaven" in a moving poem by that name -- has withdrawn all the props that hold that

artificial self-identity in place and has given us the opportunity of completing the journey back to the point we've never, in reality, left.

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Q: So is it attitude, is it hard work, is it luck? ... I continually feel that my spiritual path is one of hurry up and wait. Do this, try that. If that doesn't work try this. It's not what you do but that you do something, but you must meditate and conserve energy. But wait, what's with all this effort? That's my problem, too much effort :)

Oh well, at least I get to vent out my frustration. I feel better now.

A: Attitude? Hard work? Luck? The truth is, we don't know.

If you stand by the door long enough, it may open.

If you knock loudly enough, it may open.

If you pound hard enough, it may open.

The door is behind you; you're looking away from it.

The door is already open, but you can't see it.

The non-self cannot see the Self.

The non-self is all that is knowable.

The doorway is the threshold between the knowable and the Unknowable.

The Unknowable cannot make the transition known.

The more we realize that the Unknowable is what we desire,

And the more we lose our desire for the knowable....

Frustration is good. Action increases frustration. Spiritual action = questioning.

Questioning occurs both by thought and feeling.